



The Children's Doctor

All you need to know about... Starting School



Is my child ready for school?

All children develop at different rates. Some children will be ready for school before others of the same age. In NSW, your child may start school if they are turning five by 31 July of that year. Your child is required, by law, to start school by their sixth birthday.

Your child should have some important skills prior to starting school. They do not have to be proficient in all of these but they should be well on the way to developing these skills:

- Language -
 - ask and answer questions
 - make needs known
 - follow instructions
 - have an interest in books
 - sing nursery rhymes
- Maths-
 - count up to 10 objects
 - recognise numbers
 - recognise shapes
 - identify objects that are different
 - understand concepts up/down, in/out, over/under, in front/behind
- Social-
 - uses toilet independently
 - recite name and address
 - complete a task and pack away
 - sit still and listen to short stories
 - shares and takes turns in a game
- Physical-
 - jump, hop and run
 - cuts with scissors along a line
 - can dress independently (except laces!)

If you are in doubt about sending your child to school, you should talk to your child's preschool teachers.

How can I prepare my child for school?

Read lots of books to your child to encourage an interest in the written word. They do not need to know how to read but they do need to understand how books work and enjoy them.

Keep your child's day structured with play time, meal time, reading time, games time and quiet time. This will prepare them for the structure of school.

Educate your child regarding "stranger danger".

Teach your child road safety rules.

Be positive and excited about your child starting school (it is infectious!).